DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 375 978 PS 022 838

AUTHOR Vigo, Brenda S.
TITLE Parents as Partners in Child Care and Development: Three Programme Strategies on Parent Education in the Philippines.
INSTITUTION United Nations Children's Fund, Manila (Philippines).
PUB DATE Jun 94
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the International Conference, "Stronger Children-Stronger Families" (Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, June 20-23, 1994).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; Delivery Systems; Early Childhood Education; Educational Radio; Females; Foreign Countries; Functional Literacy; Health Education; *Home Programs; Home Visits; *Outreach Programs; *Parent Education; Parent Participation; Program Descriptions
IDENTIFIERS *Parent Empowerment; Philippines; UNICEF; United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child; World Summit for Children 1990

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the implementation of three major parent education programs and their strategies. Following an introduction to the efforts made in the Philippines to empower parents, the paper briefly describes the Programme of Cooperation and the Education for All National Plan of Action. Three case studies, all of which use different parent education strategies are described. Parent Effectiveness Services (PES) provides parent education and family empowerment by using community or home-based strategies, such as forming neighborhood parent groups, and training parents through home-visits and radio broadcasts. Positive changes in child rearing practices were recorded by the program, and the radio was found to be an effective medium for communication. The Nutrition Center of the Philippines (NCP), the program in the second case study, adopts a strategy of teacher-child-parent networks to strengthen health and nutrition education in primary schools; its success has resulted in its adoption in other countries. The last case study deals with the Non Formal Education/Female Functional Literacy (NFE/FFL) project, which integrates parent education and literacy programs, particularly of mothers. This strategy devises functional literacy material that relates to parent education. The three programs and strategies described make important contributions to the broader World Summit Goals for Children and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. (BAC)

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# Parents as Partners in Child Care and Development: Three Programme Strategies on Parent Education in the Philippines[1]

**UNICEF-Philippines**

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[1]A paper presented by Ms. Brenda S. Vigo, Project Officer for ECCD/Education/WID, UNICEF-Manila, at the International Conference "Stronger Children-Stronger Families", 20-23 June 1994, University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C., Canada.



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# Parents as Partners in Child Care and Development: Three Programme Strategies on Parent Education in the Philippines[1]

**Brenda S. Vigo**
Project Officer for ECCD/Education/WID
UNICEF-Manila

## I. Introduction

The paramount goal of past and present Philippine development efforts has been to improve the quality of life of Filipinos. The present situation in the Philippines, which is characterized by a much improved political and economic climate, provides a strong and real impetus to the attainment of this goal.

The path to the country's development, as embodied in the Philippine Medium-Term Development Plan (1994-1998) is anchored on three interdependent strategies: total human development, international competitiveness, and sustainable development. The task of transforming the country into a newly-industrializing country by the year 2000 is based on these strategies, while their underlying tactical focus is on people empowerment.

The Philippine Plan of Action for Education for All lies at the core of the efforts to attain the country's development goal. It is, therefore, toward these directions that various educational programmes are being pursued. UNICEF's assistance to the education sector is likewise contributing to this goal. Such assistance includes the development and promotion of parent education as a strategy that cuts across the various sectoral programmes in health, nutrition, water/sanitation, area-based integrated basic services for children, women in development and advocacy/social mobilization.

Parent education efforts have a long history in the Philippines. As early as the 1970's, efforts to promote the education of parents, particularly the mothers, were initiated through government and non-government organizations. Among these government organizations are the Departments of Agriculture, Social Welfare, Health, Education, the Commission on Population, and state universities and colleges through their community extension services. The content areas of present education programmes of these agencies vary from one agency to another depending on the mandate of the agency.

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[1]A paper presented at the International Conference "Stronger Children-Stronger Families", 20-23 June, University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C., Canada.

In recent years, the need for parent education programmes and other forms of support services to Filipino parents and families become urgent owing to the impact of a fast changing socio-economic and cultural environment resulting from rapid urbanization, industrialization and migration. Moreover, the increasing number of women entering the labour market, both domestic and overseas, has taken its toll on the vulnerable members of the family, namely, the children.

In this context, there is an increasing recognition of the need to expand existing programmes and develop innovative strategies on parent education and family empowerment.

Various agencies, both government and non-government, have increased their collaboration to increase outreach and improve the impact of their programmes.

One such type of collaboration is the Government of the Philippines-UNICEF Country Programme for Children (GOP-UNICEF/CPC). This programme is participated in by government line agencies, local government units, and government agencies and is coordinated by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).

Under this programme of cooperation, various strategies are implemented to promote parents' empowerment for the attainment of the goals of child survival, protection and development. The strategies seek to improve parents' effectiveness in performing important roles as caregivers, providers and teachers of their children from infancy to adolescence.

This paper presents the experiences in implementing three major parent education strategies under the GOP-UNICEF/Programme of Cooperation. These were adopted from the ten-year National Plan of Action on Education for All (EFA), 1991-2000 and the Philippine Plan of Action for Children (PPAC). These strategies are: (a) the Parent Effectiveness Service under the national Early Childhood Care and Development Programme; (b) the Teacher-Child-Parent approach to strengthen health and nutrition education in primary schools; and (c) the Parent Education/Female Functional Literacy component of non-formal education programme.

Thus, in the GOP-UNICEF Programme of Cooperation, parent education strategies and programmes are seen in their important contributions to the attainment of EFA goals; the goals of the PPAC; the broader World Summit Goals for Children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## II. The GOP-UNICEF Programme of Cooperation and the Education for All National Plan of Action

### Global Events

In September 1990, two major global events were launched for the cause of children. One was the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the other, the organization and conduct of the World Summit for Children which brought together 71 heads of states all to discuss issues and concerns confronting the world's children. The latter was the first major global action for the implementation of the CRC. The participants submitted a World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action which endorsed global goals for children for the year 2000. The document committed each signatory to formulate a National Plan of Action for Children.

The Philippines, being one of the first signatories to this World Declaration, formulated the Philippine Plan of Action for Children (PPAC). This was adopted and implemented thru Presidential Proclamation No. 585 signed by the then President Corazon C. Aquino.

PPAC outlines specific goals and targets for maintaining and promoting the well-being of Filipino children in five areas:

- Family care and alternative parental arrangements
- Basic health, nutrition, and social security
- Safe environment
- Basic education, leisure, recreation and cultural activities
- Fundamental civil rights of children

### Country Programme for Children

The GOP-UNICEF Programme of Cooperation called Country Programme for Children (CPC) dates back to 1979 when the Government and UNICEF initiated a country programme approach to programming of UNICEF assistance to the Philippines. Since 1979, there have been four programmes of cooperation, namely: CPC I: 1978-1982; CPC II: 1983-1987; CPC III: 1988-1993; and CPC IV: 1994-1998.

Throughout the three past programmes of cooperation (CPC I to III), parent education and empowerment played a major role in the achievement of the programme objectives. A study conducted in 1992 to evaluate the impact of the UNICEF-assisted

Area-based Child Survival and Development Programme in seven most disadvantaged provinces in the Philippines showed that the decision-making role of parents has the greatest impact on the demand for and utilization of basic services delivered to improve child's survival, protection and development. Thus, there is a recognition that better informed parents on proper child-care practices results in better decisions on parents' choice of available social services that will ensure children's welfare and well-being.

Experiences under the past three country programmes particularly in delivering parent education services were used as bases in the development of CPC IV.

The overall strategies reflect a strong orientation towards the empowerment of parents; increasing access to a mix of basic services for child survival, protection and development; strengthening community participation; strengthening programme management; intensification of advocacy and social mobilization; and improving the information base on children. These are all consonant with the strategies under the Philippine Plan of Action for Children.

Elements of family and community empowerment shall be interwoven into all direct services. In addition, the programme of cooperation shall have distinct activities to centre on empowerment of families and communities, as a means for enhancing the demand side of service delivery efforts. In the context of empowering families and communities, support services for women shall be a significant priority.

CPC IV has ten programme components on Health, Nutrition, Water/Sanitation, Education for All, Women and Adolescent Girls Development, Integrated Rural and Urban Basic Services, Assistance to Children and Family Victims of Natural Disaster, , Advocacy/Social Mobilization, Monitoring of PPAC, and Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances.

**Education for All**

Representatives of some 155 governments and 124 non-government organizations had declared their commitments to promoting Education for All through the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA), held in Jomtien, Thailand in March, 1990.

As a signatory to the World Declaration on EFA, the Philippine Government is commited to the achievement of EFA goals as embodied in the National EFA Plan (1991-2000) which was adopted as a component of the Medium-term Philippine Development Plan (1994-1998) and PPAC.

The Philippine EFA Plan is guided by the following vision and philosophy:

> "... The ultimate aim of education is to develop in the learner desirable knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which he can effectively

use to alleviate poverty and improve the quality of his life, his family, the community and the larger society."

"Education shall be pursued along the concept of a holistic learning system where education is equated with lifelong learning with the world as a classroom. ... In anticipation of the massive changes brought about by industrialization by the year 2000, education shall guard against weakening of the family as a basic social unit, the erosion of desirable traditional values and the onslaught of materialism, alienation and other negative outcomes associated with industrial progress."

In keeping with the global movement, the Philippine EFA Plan pursues the grand alliance of all sectors in the implementation of the EFA social mobilization, educational policy-making and planning and project development at all administrative and geographic levels.

The National EFA Plan and its component plans at regional/ provincial and municipal levels is a product of long and intensive multisectoral consultations at all levels. Moreover, planning and coordinating inter-agency EFA committees have been organized and are in place at national, regional, provincial (and in selected municipal) levels to see through the implementation of their respective EFA Plans. Much advocacy and social mobilization activities have been undertaken jointly by UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, ADB and the Philippine Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) since the launching of the movement in 1990. To date, the EFA Plans are at various stages of implementation.

The EFA Plan has three major programme components, namely: (a) institutionalization of early childhood care and development (ECCD) as a basic service for children; (b) universalization of quality primary education; (c) eradication of illiteracy and continuing education and development.

## III. Parent Education Strategies: Three Case Studies

In the context of Philippine Plan of Action for Children, the National EFA Plan and the GOP-UNICEF Programme of Cooperation, parent edcucation was adopted as a priority strategy for attaining the goals on child survival, protection and development.

Three cases will be presented to analyze Philippine experiences in implementing parent education strategies and programmes in cooperation with UNICEF.

These experiences will describe how parent education, as a strategy, cut across the three programme areas of the EFA Plan, namely: ECCD, Primary Education and Literacy/Continuing Education.

## A. Parent Effectiveness Service: The Home-based Component of the ECCD Programme

In ECCD, parent education and family empowerment is implemented through parent effectiveness services.

**Background**. The Situation Analysis of Filipino Children and Women (NEDA-UNICEF, 1992) reports that the lack of parental knowledge (and skills) on proper child care, particularly among the disadvantaged families, is a major contributing factor to poor health, nutritional and educational status of children. Disadvantaged families are often found in urban and rural slum areas, cultural communities, upland and nearshore villages.

It should be emphasized that parental inadequacies are not of choice but are results of socio-cultural, economic, and political factors which are largely traced to our colonial history. Being so, practical "interventions" can be introduced to provide parent support services, one of which is the Parent Effectiveness Service (PES).

**Description**. PES is one of the regular services of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). It is one of the components of ECCD which is a programme under the GOP-UNICEF Programme of Cooperation. It is defined as "the provision and expansion of knowledge and skills of parents and others involved in child caring on early childhood development, health care, behaviour management, husband and wife relationships, children's rights, and parenting duties and responsibilities."

Since its introduction in the late 70s, PES has also been adapted by various non-government organizations and pre-school learning institutions. This has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of beneficiaries through the years. For instance, the number of parents served in 1991 was estimated at 143,000 while in 1992 it was placed at 160,000.

**Strategies**. PES activities are either community or home-based. Delivery strategies include interpersonal (social welfare officers, community volunteers) and mass media, particularly radio. Innovations are continuously being undertaken to make the service more effective and reach more parents.

Neighbourhood parents group. The community serves as the centerpoint of major learning activities under the PES. A trained early childhood care and development (ECCD) worker organizes the neighbourhood parent effectiveness assembly (NPEA). This is composed of parents with children aged 0 to 6 years old. Each NPEA is composed of 10-20 parents who get together weekly to discuss and share problems and their solutions.

From among the members, a lead couple is selected. The couple's responsibility includes mobilizing the members for the meeting, preparing the venue, and arranging for volunteers to take care of the children while they hold a session.

The session begins with a prayer, group singing or a game. Parents review the highlights of the previous session while the facilitator outlines the topics for the day.

Parents are given time to describe how the lessons have been applied in their day-to-day parenting tasks. Topics are organized under three major topics: responsible parenthood, health care, early childhood enrichment, and children's rights.

The day's lessons are presented not through the traditional straight lecture but through participatory and interactive activities such as role playing, dramatization, small group discussion, lecturette, workshops, folk media, and case examples.

The facilitator then discusses with the parents activities that could be done at home to immediately apply the day's lessons. For example, parents could read stories on nutrition to their children, prepare low-cost mobile for infants, visit a herbal medicine garden in the community, or watch an educational TV programme, etc.

The session ends with a summary of the important lessons of the day and planning for the next session.

Home visits. Although many parents recognize the value of attending PES sessions, some are still unable to do so for various reasons. During the day, some parents would prefer engaging in income-generating activities to meet immediate (survival) needs. Mothers, on the other hand, have their hands full with household chores aside from taking care of the children.

To overcome these constraints, the home training component of the PES was developed. Trained field workers or volunteers regularly visit parents at their homes for discussion and sharing. Parents are given materials to read.

The home-based approach has many other advantages. First, it adds a personal touch to PES which is very important among Filipinos. Second, parents can be more open and specific in sharing their problems in the privacy of their homes than in a community assembly. In return, the

PES worker can be more specific in suggesting options to their problems. Moreover, the social worker can see the actual conditions of the children.

Parenting on-the-air. Another innovation on the PES introduced in 1992 in Maguindanao, a Muslim province in Southern Philippines, is the ECCD school-on-the-air. This 30-minute programme is aired from Tuesday to Friday over radio station dxMS-AM, a popular radio station. It is produced by Promex Foundation, a local NGO, in cooperation with the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and with financial and technical support from UNICEF.

From 7:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., parents (mostly mothers) enroled in the "school" listen to the day's lesson. Highlights are also listed down on their notebooks. Once a week, the parents attend a group learning sessions managed by a trained facilitator for further discussion, sharing of lessons and experiences and gathering of feedback. Examinations are also given to monitor progress of the "students." After four months, the parents complete the course and are given certificates of completion.

The ECCD school-on-the-air can be heared in the nearby provinces of Lanao del Sur, Cotabato and Davao del Sur. Despite the absence of formal learning sessions, many parents from these areas had expressed appreciation of the benefits they got from listening to the radio programme. Occasionally, they send letters of inquiry and feedback to the radio station based in Cotabato City. In 1992 alone, the school had 3,209 enrolees, 225 community facilitators and 43 trainors.

**Impact**. Positive changes in child-rearing practices were monitored among parents who participated in PES sessions. An evaluation conducted from 1987 to 1989 (by HEWSPEC) recorded some of these practices to include: (a) improved nutrition (and eating habits) of children; (b) prevention or elimination of child abuse and punishment; (c) good grooming; (d) values education; and (e) development of self-reliance.

The same study noted that a significant number of parents observed positive improvements in their children's behaviour which they attributed to their application of lessons learned through PES sessions. Among these are more self-reliant children, parents are more expressive and demonstrative about their feelings, etc.

**Future Plan**. There are many advantages of using radio for education. It can reach more people; it is the most popular and credible medium among Filipinos; and it is also the most accessible.

The success of the Maguindanao experience has encouraged the DSWD to implement a modified ECCD school-on-the-air nationwide starting the third quarter of this year. This will be a UNICEF-assisted project of the Bureau of Family and Community Welfare of DSWD in cooperation with the Philippine Children's Television Foundation, a non-government organization.

As in the Maguindanao experience, parents will be invited to enrol in the programme. The "students" will be provided with lesson sheets and assignments. PES workers or volunteers will monitor the "students" and a certificate of attendance will be given to parents who complete the 13 sessions which comprise one module.

The advent of new communication technologies presents greater opportunities to disseminate knowledge and information needed to improve the quality of life of Filipinos, especially the children. There are now efforts to go multimedia from low-cost (e.g. folk media) to telecommunications satellite. What is often lacking is the software or the messages that go to these technologies. This is the major challenge that face our programme planners and implementors.

But, the greatest challenge in the PES is how to go on a wider scale. As experiences show, there is no single approach and medium in reaching out to parents and that no single agency or entity could do it alone. The challenge is how to continue to work together and to expand the network of advocating for parent education.

### B. The Teacher-Child-Parent Relay System in Primary Schools

Under the programme of universalization of primary education, one of the effective strategies for reaching parents and involving them in school activities of their children is the project on teacher-child-parent approach to strengthen health and nutrition education in primary schools.

**Background**. In the late 70's, the first nationwide nutrition survey disclosed the high prevalence of ill health and malnutrition among elementary schoolchildren in the Philippines. Large numbers of children were found to be suffering from varying forms and degrees of protein energy malnutrition, and deficiencies in vitamin A, iron and iodine. This called attention on the school not only as a target area for intervention but also as a strategic channel for community health and nutrition outreach. The Government identified the need for an integrated health education programme that would link the efforts of the family with the school and the community. The Nutrition Center of the Philippines (NCP) therefore conceptualized the teacher-child-parent (T-C-P) approach as an innovative relay system to promote health and nutrition education. In 1978, NCP in partnership with the DECS launched the T-C-P project. Together with the National Nutrition Council, a teacher reference material called the Nutrition Information Series was developed and distributed to about 326,620 teachers in 32,652 schools throughout the country. This was revised in 1982.

As updated information on the nutritional status of children during the early 1980's continued to disclose the persistent problem of malnutrition among schoolchildren, NCP further improved the T-C-P strategies to include the preparation of teaching guides, intensive training of teachers and development of pupils' workbooks highlighting messages that were meant to impact on the health and nutritional status of children. These materials were tried out and finalized with financial assistance from the Canadian UNICEF Committee and the Canadian International Development Agency (CUC-CIDA) through UNICEF. The success of the pilot project convinced the Philippine Government to institutionalize the project by mandating all public and private elementary schools through DECS Memorandum Order No. 211, Series 1991 to implement the T-C-P approach in relevant subjects.

UNICEF continues to assist the project in terms of developing the capability of sub-national offices of DECS to advocate for local government support in complying with DECS Order No. 211. This will address the need for sustained action to combat the malnutrition problem of schoolchildren, 23 per cent of whom continue to suffer from severe to moderate malnutrition as of 1990.

**Objectives**. The T-C-P project through the years sought (a) to raise the levels of health and nutrition knowledge, attitude and practice of target groups; (b) increase community participation in health and nutrition efforts; and (c) improve the health and nutrition status of schoolchildren and vulnerable groups.

**Project Description**. As a comprehensive package of services, the T-C-P project integrates nutrition messages in the primary school curriculum and relays these messages through the teacher-child-parent network. It provides supplementary feeding to moderately and severely underweight schoolchildren, promotes health and environmental sanitation practices and promotes bio-intensive gardening to increase food production in school and in the community.

The incorporation of nutrition messages in the curriculum starting in Grade III is carried out by distributing to teachers a series of developed and already tested instructional materials as guide for teachers in integrating nutrition and health concepts in the primary grade levels.

A set of pupil-parent materials or workbook is also given to facilitate integration at the basic level. It is a tool to monitor the extent to which messages are relayed and put into practice by the child and parents.

**Accomplishments**. The present set of T-C-P materials consists of 22 modules on health and nutrition for integration in the subjects of Grades III-VI in Science and Health, Home Economics and Livelihood Education, Character Building, Civics and Culture. The pupil's workbook with exercises to be done at home is a medium for

parent-child interaction and feedbacking of relevant information to the teacher who then institutes appropriate action in school, in the community or with health workers.

With the new set of materials including the height and weight posters, the Food Production Handbook and the T-C-P Class Record with a growth monitoring chart, about 6,000 teachers involving about 240,000 pupils and 400,000 parents have benefited annually, most of them in Regions 3, NCR, 6, 9, 11 and 12.

An evaluation study of the project covering a sample of 47 schools, 146 teachers and 3,435 schoolchild-mother pairs in three survey periods showed that T-C-P was effective in increasing the level of health and nutrition programme implementation in the school; in improving the knowledge, attitude and practices of schoolchildren and their mothers; and in improving the health and nutritional status of schoolchildren. These findings prompted DECS to institutionalize the T-C-P approach with the issuance of DECS Memorandum Order No. 211. This Order mandates all public and private elementary schools to implement T-C-P strategies and utilize the prescribed materials.

In 1992, the findings of the evaluation were reinforced by the rapid appraisal of the project conducted in five Area-based Child Survival and Development provinces where the following benefits were noted: constructive collaboration between school and parents/community; broadened knowledge on proper eating habits and inculcation of correct health habits; application of health and nutrition concepts in day-to-day living and general feeling of satisfaction among parents in their involvement in T-C-P activities. These results gave strong indications of the potentials of the T-C-P approach as a significant contributor towards the goals of Health Education for All in the next century.

Furthermore, the T-C-P project has gone international. Trainers from the Nutrition Center of the Philippines and the School Health and Nutrition Center of DECS have provided technical assistance to Western Pacific countries in the organization and management of T-C-P initiatives. On the other hand, fellows from Western Pacific have been sent for training in the Philippines to enable them to better implement T-C-P projects in their respective countries and contribute towards improved health and nutrition practices among their people.

With the implementation of the Local Government Code and the corresponding decentralization of local government operations starting in 1991, DECS and NCP adopted new advocacy strategies directed at local government executives, barangay officials, non-government organizations and PVOs. Their efforts proved particularly successful in the provinces of Leyte, Zamboanga del Norte and Cebu. About 67 barangays in these provinces are now fully supporting with their own local funds, an Integrated Nutrition Programme which includes T-C-P among the four project components. Also the Rotary Club has started to sponsor T-C-P requirements of selected schools in Rizal, Kalookan, Quezon City and Pasay City.

**Future Directions**. Prospects for continued support of T-C-P project in urban areas where it is most needed are encouraging. DECS is starting to integrate AIDS education and strengthen further its environmnent focus in T-C-P concerns. This is another innovative move that can mobilize support and generate resources for the project. UNICEF is therefore directing its assistance to strengthening community organizing efforts for T-C-P to enable both the local proponents and beneficiaries to affect local decision making in the face of changing leadership.

Advocacy will be intensified whereby local inter-agency groups will be trained to prepare localized advocacy materials highlighting local health and nutrition information to create an impact on local decision makers. Campaigns for packaged support indicating minimum costs for specific schools in communities identified as priority for adoption of the approach will be launched. School officials will be trained to become primary advocates of child-related programmes in their community. The Asian Institute of Journalism, an NGO with broad links with private business institutions and media is being tapped to maximize social mobilization efforts of the project and integrate T-C-P concerns in the overall social mobilization activities of Education for All.

## C. Parent Education and Female Functional Literacy in Non-formal Education

Under this programme component, parent education is integrated into the pilot project called "parent education/female functional literacy" which is implemented in seven most depressed provinces in the Philippines as part of an integrated Area-based Child Survival and Development Programme.

**Background**. The UNICEF-assisted education programme for women in the Philippines was developed in response to the problem of disparity in levels of literacy between male and female in some depressed areas in the country. Despite a high overall national literacy rate exceeding 80 per cent, pockets of illiteracy persist among women in poorest provinces of the country as shown through the following data:

| | Literacy rate (%) (1980) | Rural Male | Rural Female |
|---|---|---|---|
| Philippines | 83.3 | 77.6 | 76.0 |
| Sulu | 32.4 | 29.0 | 23.1 |
| Basilan | 49.7 | 49.2 | 39.5 |
| Tawi-Tawi | 64.9 | 67.5 | 62.9 |
| Maguindanao | 47.3 | 43.6 | 35.3 |
| Lanao del Sur | 52.2 | 51.2 | 44.4 |
| Ifugao | 55.4 | 54.9 | 51.2 |

Thus, in 1988, World Education was asked by UNICEF Manila to assist in developing a nonformal education programme for women in support of the UNICEF-assisted Area-based Child Survival and Development Programme (ABCSDP) of CPC III. ABCSDP was created as a decentralized system of delivering basic services more efficiently to the most depressed provinces of the country. With the observation that actual availment of basic services depended, to a large extent, on the level of literacy of the beneficiaries, the Nonformal Education/Female Functional Literacy (NFE/FFL) programme was initiated in 1988 for the ABCSDP beneficiaries so they can avail of the basic services made available under the CPC III programme. Thus, the programme supports the delivery of integrated basic services in health, nutrition, waste and sanitation and education.

**Project Description**. The NFE/FFL project aimed to provide parents, particularly mothers, with the opportunities to learn skills and knowledge and develop attitudes and values that will help them perform effectively their roles in child survival, protection and development.

The project involves capability-building through training of trainers and development of consistent programme processes, including materials development, organization of classes, monitoring and evaluation and advocacy.

A unique feature of the project is its inter-agency core of trainers at national and provincial levels composed of representatives from the Departments of Education, Agriculture, Social Welfare, Interior and Local Government, and Health and NGOs. The national Inter-agency Committee (IAC) led by the Bureau of NonFormal Education-DECS is in charge of project management, provides technical assistance to provincial IAC, monitoring and evaluation. The provincial IAC, on the other hand, takes charge of overall planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation in the provinces.

Of primary importance to project implementation are the area-based, community and culture-specific literacy materials which are locally developed in a series of workshops bringing together the provincial and national IAC. The IAC serves as the moving force in the integration of maternal and child health, nutrition, food production, women's issues and other development concepts in the FFL materials. These concepts are the major content areas of the materials which are linked with literacy and numeracy skills in an effort to demonstrate to clientele how basic literacy skills can enhance their ability to take action on health/nutrition and other messages basic to survival, protection and development of children and women's health and other concerns.

**Strategies**. The project has the following strategies:

(a) Inter-agency collaboration. A major strategy of the programme is the organization of IACs for training, materials development

and monitoring at national and provincial levels. The IAC is composed of representatives from the Departments of Education, Health, Social Welfare, Interior and Local Government and Agriculture;

(b) Capability-building. This provides training to the national/provincial core of trainers and literacy class facilitators to orient them and enhance their skills on NFE methods/ techniques to create a common understanding and assumptions about the NFE/FFL programme. The set of assumptions developed would guide the IAC and establish the basic guidelines for IAC collaboration and cooperation;

(c) Materials development. The materials development process involves a series of workshops which bring together representatives of the Departments of Education, Interior and Local Government, Agriculture, Health, and Social Welfare. These representatives are mostly personnel working closely with mothers and older girls. The topics and key content areas of the materials are discussed lengthily and once agreement is reached, workshop participants begin to work on lessons for functional literacy classes. Key concept areas vary from province to province depending on the areas needs and priorities. However, across the seven pilot provinces, the following concepts emerge as priority for integration into the lessons and functional literacy materials: (i) maternal health such as self care during pregnancy and child birth; (ii) child health and nutrition such as messages on immunization, proper weaning practices; (iii) herbal medicine; (iv) food production methods; (v) environmental sanitation; (vi) women's rights and responsibilities. A the end of the workshops a basic set of 30-40 lessons in the form of facilitator's guide, learners' primer and other support materials are developed. The materials developed are pre-tested before finalization and production;

(d) Organization and conduct of classes. Functional literacy classes are flexible and are scheduled taking into consideration the availability of the majority of the clientele. Classes are held for three months covering the 200-hours necessary to make a non-literate literate. The parateachers (called facilitators) who are trained on the methods of teaching adults (andragogy method) and on the use of literacy materials facilitate the classes attended by an average of 25 learners per class. Classes are usually held in the afternoon or during Saturdays;

(e) Monitoring and evaluation. Periodic monitoring and evaluation are conducted by the national and provincial IAC and reports are fedback to project implementors and funding agency.

**Accomplishments**. As of December 1993, the pilot-testing of the FFL approach in six of the seven ABCSDP provinces had reached 15,000 illiterate women coming from cultural communities. This represents 12 per cent of the targeted illiterate female population in the project areas. There is generally high completion rate among learners. Furthermore the widening outreach of the programme included male learners due to high demand among males for acquisition of reading, writing and numeracy skills.

Among the perceived impact of the project are: (a) learners' awareness of the importance of literacy and numeracy in daily life; (b) enhanced self-esteem and self-concept among beneficiaries resulting in increased participation in community activities such as community food production and health education; (c) increased utilization of available social services among learners/graduates; (d) strengthened collaboration among different agencies and improved capability in management of literacy programme that is need-based and culture-specific.

**Issues/Future Directions**. The rapid appraisal of FFL conducted in 1993 reported the following issues and problems: (a) the two hundred hours duration of the course is too short to master basic literacy skills; (b) lack of follow-up materials for neo-literates; (c) inadequate financial support for preparation of instructional materials causing the facilitators (para-teachers) to use their personal funds; inter-agency collaboration is effective only in materials development process and in training but not in actual implementation; (d) the need to institutionalize the project into the various collaborating agencies; and (e) the difficulty in sustaining the subsidy given to facilitators/parateachers.

These issues are being considered in the expansion of the NFE/FFL in other provinces outside the ABCSDP areas such as the 18 project sites of the maternal and child health programme assisted by the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau as a support to its health education activities and in selected areas under the Fourth Country Programme for Children, 1994-1998. Moreover, the approaches of the FFL were also considered in the formulation of the $25-million NFE programme to be implemented starting in 1993 up to 1998 through a loan from the Asian Development Bank.

## IV. Summary of Lessons Learned and Conclusion

The three case studies just presented represent only a sample of major parent education strategies and programmes which had worked in the Philippines. To be sure, these programmes are not without flaws. Nonetheless, these had been proven to be viable initiatives for promoting the role of parents and other members of the family in child survival, protection and development.

There are, of course, other strategies and programmes of government and non-government organizations, which seek to contribute to the goals of the Philippine Plan of Action for Children. In particular, the NGOs and their networks have contributed

significantly to the Government's effort in promoting effective parenting. NGO contributions have been recognized in pilot-testing innovative approaches to reach the hard-to-reach population groups. These NGO experiences were also used as basis for the development of government policies and programmes for wider application particularly when government and NGO collaboration is part of the programme design.

The use of mass media, particularly the radio, has also been found cost-effective in expanding programme coverages. However, in order to maximize the impact of mass media, these will have to be used together with other strategies such as facilitated group discussions, print support materials, and community volunteer home visits.

The coordination of all agencies involved in parent education particularly with regard to advancing priority messages that support the long-term goals of the country and the World Summit Goals for Children also needs to be further strengthened..

As a final note, the Philippine expriences showed that parent education should be looked at as a cross-cutting strategy that helps meet the demand for and support the delivery of basic social services to the programme beneficiaries.

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